

NURSING AT THE RED CROSS CONFERENCE AT CANNES.

Miss Lloyd Still, Matron of St. Thomas's Hospital, London, and Miss Gill, Lady Superintendent of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, have recently returned from the Conference of the "Committee of the Red Cross Societies" at Cannes, which they had been invited to as British delegates on nursing.

The Conference had been called at the invitation of the American Red Cross, and the organisation, which was entirely in their hands, had been admirably carried out. All the delegates were the guests of the American Red Cross.

It is felt to be a matter of great satisfaction that the nursing profession was represented, and that a nursing section of the Conference had been arranged for.

The delegates included representatives from all the allied countries, and amongst those present were many famous doctors and scientists.

The nursing delegates were:—

AMERICA.—Miss Julia C. Stimson (Chairman), Director of Nursing Service, American Expeditionary Force, and (in the unavoidable absence of Miss Delano) Miss Carrie M. Hall, Chief Nurse of the American Red Cross in France.

GREAT BRITAIN.—Miss Gill, R.R.C. (Secretary), Lady Superintendent of Nurses, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh; Miss Lloyd Still, C.B.E., R.R.C., Matron, St. Thomas's Hospital, and Superintendent of the Nightingale Training School.

FRANCE.—The Countess Roussy de Sales, French Red Cross (Secour au Blesse Militaire).

ITALY.—Professor Emelia Anselmi, Secy. Ispethrice Generale dela Infermerie Volonteria Croce Rossa Italiana; the Countess Nerina Gigliucci, Infermiere Volonteria, Croce Rossa Italiana.

There was no nursing delegate from Japan.

The Committee of Red Cross Societies was constituted to formulate and propose to the Red Cross Societies of the world an extended programme of Red Cross activities in the interests of humanity.

The Conference comprised the following sections: (1) Preventive Medicine; (2) Child Welfare; (3) Tuberculosis; (4) Malaria; (5) Venereal Disease; (6) Nursing.

All the members met in general conference each morning, and the sections met in Committee each afternoon.

Very graphic and interesting accounts were given of Child Welfare and Tuberculosis work, both in America and Great Britain. It was recognised the success of all branches of public health work must depend largely on the employment of trained women, and the necessity of a great increase in the present number of trained workers was pointed out. Many thousands it was said would be required in the near future.

Miss Julia C. Stimson presented a preliminary report from the Nursing Committee. In drafting

any report, the difference in the standards of nursing in the allied countries had to be taken into consideration, and the subject had to be treated on very broad lines.

The British and American delegates who met in conference some days before the arrival of those from Italy and France, felt strongly that many of the subjects under discussion were very far-reaching, and would necessarily affect large bodies of workers, and that before any decisions were arrived at, a much larger and more representative body of professional women should meet to consider them, and this was eventually included as a recommendation in the preliminary report.

Among the recommendations were that, in connection with the proposed International Red Cross Bureau, there should be a department of nursing to act as an intelligence centre and to undertake propaganda, and also that National Red cross organisations should keep registers of trained nurses available for any national or local emergency, as well as registers of Red Cross workers, with full data of their experience.

It was recognised that the Red Cross organisations possess enormous possibilities for assisting the medical profession in a world health campaign, and in addition to funds and existing organisations, they have in all countries a valuable asset in personnel, which includes both the fully trained professional nurses and the untrained and partially trained workers. It was considered desirable that facilities for training in public health and social welfare should be afforded to both these classes, large numbers of whom are being released from war work.

With regard to the Red Cross workers, it was thought that many would after the war be willing to take up definite and regular work, and that others would be obliged by circumstances to do so.

Tributes were paid to the work during the war both of the trained nurses and of the V.A.D. members, and Auxiliary Red Cross nurses, and their devotion to duty even unto death was mentioned by several speakers.

Among the questions deferred for future discussion were the requirements and training for public health work, and the use which could be made of the material already to hand.

A great many informal conversations regarding nursing conditions in the various countries took place, and it was noted that the nursing problems arising out of the war, which each country had to face, were very similar, the principal problem being the shortage of trained nurses and the necessity in the absence of sufficient trained orderlies of a junior grade of nurse. It was interesting to note the way in which each country had dealt with it.

A war gratuity will be given to Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses in Army employment, and Mr. Forster says it is hoped to make an announcement on the subject shortly.

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